

Guessing Stories.



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1861

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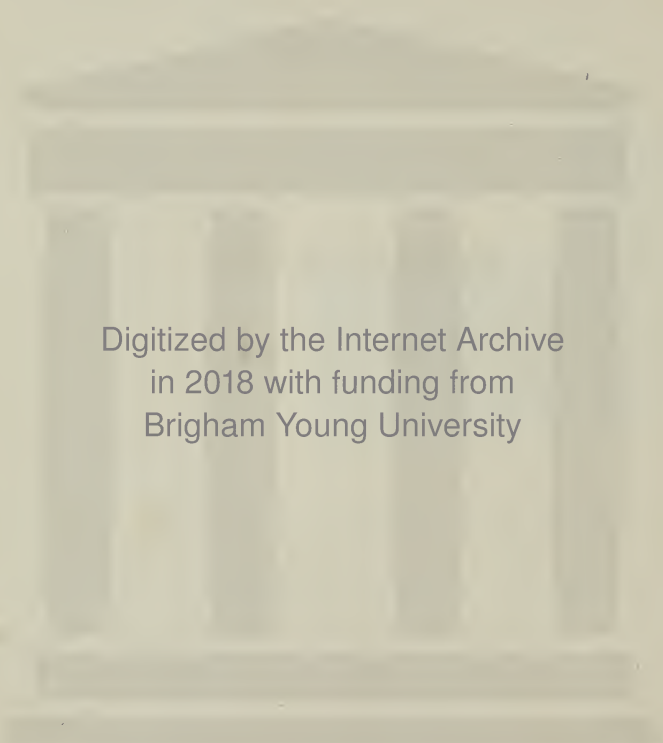


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GUESSING STORIES.



GUESSING STORIES:

OR,

THE SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF THE

MAN WITH THE EXTRA

PAIR OF EYES.

A BOOK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY A COUNTRY PARSON.



LONDON:

BELL AND DALDY, 186, FLEET STREET.

1861.

TO THE
LADY MILDRED A. C. M. BERESFORD HOPE,
OF BEDGEBURY,
THE FOLLOWING STORIES,
ORIGINALLY RECITED FOR THE AMUSEMENT
OF HER YOUNG CIRCLE,
ARE NOW,
WITH HER LADYSHIP'S KIND PERMISSION,
DEDICATED,
AS A TRIFLING ACKNOWLEDGMENT
OF MANY KINDNESSES,
BY HER SINCERE AND ATTACHED FRIEND,
THE COUNTRY PARSON.



PREFACE.



THE idea of the following "Guessing Stories," or stories of the nature of riddles, was suggested by a well-known one in the justly popular "Evenings at Home;" which perhaps may be traced, in its turn, to one of the "Veillées du Chateau" of Madame de Genlis. While some of them can serve only as an exercise of youthful ingenuity, others, such as "The Lazy Giants," "The Enchanted Island," and "The Invisible Prince," will, it

may be hoped, answer the higher purpose of leading young minds to dwell, with somewhat more than a mere passing thought, on the mysteries which lie around and within us.

After some hesitation, it has been thought best *not* to supply the solution or key to the several stories. With the assistance of older friends, their meaning, even to the minuter details, all of which have been carefully considered, will easily be deciphered.

April, 1861.



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INTRODUCTORY.

THE MAN WITH THE EXTRA PAIR OF EYES.

IN the days when Fairies lived, and fairy gifts were plentiful, there was a worthy man who, for some good turn he had done to one of the good folks, had received a very singular reward. This was nothing else than an EXTRA PAIR OF EYES, which he could slip on and off at pleasure. They were not exactly spectacles. He did not put

them upon his nose ; nor could he say exactly where he did put them. All he knew was, that, whenever he liked to have them on, there they were. And it was surprising what curious things he saw, whether he stayed at home or travelled abroad, by the help of these same Extra Eyes. When he told people what he saw with them, or had seen in his travels and adventures, they would not believe him. And then he would bid them just slip them on for a minute ; or beg them to go to the various places he had been visiting, and try them on there. And they never failed to acknowledge that all he had described was perfectly true, though somehow they had never been able to see it before.

The following stories, then, are related entirely on this good man's authority.

However improbable, or even impossible, some of them may seem, they are strictly TRUE; and if my young friends will only be at the pains, after they have heard each story—(I should recommend their being read aloud)—to slip on the EXTRA EYES, which our friend, or any of their grown-up friends, will always be very willing to lend them, they will admit that they are so.





THE LAZY GIANTS.

IN a very out-of-the-way corner of the world,—in fact, almost in the latitude of Kamtschatka, and in no longitude at all, I believe,—there lives a very peculiar race of people, whom we may call the LAZY GIANTS. For Giants they are, compared with those about them, of whom you will hear more presently: and as for laziness, I think you will agree with me, when you come to hear of their ways, that they are the very

laziest people under the sun. Indeed, to conceal nothing, and at the risk of awakening envious feelings in the bosoms of some of my young readers, I must frankly confess that they never do anything at all.

The truth is, they have a very clever and handy set of servants about them, who save them the trouble of doing anything whatever for themselves. Each Giant has a score or more of these servants, at least; though, indeed, they hardly know themselves how many they have. But each of them has much about the same number in constant attendance upon him, and doing all his work.

The odd thing is, however, that the Giants fancy all the time that they do the work themselves. They talk of “doing this,” and “finishing that;” and they walk about with

a great deal of importance, as if it was all their doing ; when, in reality, they never so much as give any orders, but leave the servants to find out what they wish to have done. And this perhaps is the strangest thing of all, that they never speak to their servants, nor have any idea how it is the servants find out what to do. Neither can the servants, for their part, give any account of how they learn their master's pleasure. But certain it is, that, no sooner does a thing enter into his head and take possession of it, than it enters into theirs too ; and so, by the time he has quite made up his mind to do it, why, their minds are made up too ; and away they go and do it immediately, without troubling him about it.

A monstrous easy life of it, therefore, have these Giants. You don't suppose that, when

they want to dig in their garden, for example, they do it themselves? Not they. They must look on, it is true, or the servants would not go on with their work; but that is all. The way of it is this. The Giant stands by, and, as I said before, as soon as he has *quite* made up his mind to begin—thereupon, I say, though not till then,—some half-dozen or so of the servants make a spring at the handle of the huge spade, which is at least ten times as tall as they are high. As soon as they have got upon it, clinging to it as sailors do to a yard-arm, another set of them lay hold of it down below. Half-a-score more of them take a good run, and jump with all their force on the iron part of the spade. And so, what with the topsmen hanging on with all their weight, and those at the bottom shoving, and

stamping, and what not, in goes the spade, and up goes the earth, and so the digging goes forward. Meanwhile the Giant stands by, making exactly the right sort of faces, you know, to keep up appearances, as if *he* was doing it all, and (which is odd enough) perspiring profusely all the time.

But nothing is more pleasant than to see one of the Giants set out for an airing in his huge waggon. Of course he is a great deal too lazy to drive himself; and, luckily for him, there is no occasion for his doing so. For no sooner has he climbed into his seat, than up jump some half-dozen of his nimble little men at one side of him, and lay hold of the great flat reins among them; as many more mount the box on the other side, hoisting the immense whip, with a handle as thick as their bodies, into the

air. Now, whether they watch the old Giant's eye as he sits there, and so guess which way he wants to go, and how fast he likes to go, I cannot tell you, and they cannot tell you either : but certain it is that they do know, somehow or other, which rein to pull, and when to pull it ; and the others know when to come down on the great horse's back with a handsome thwack of the whip ; in a word, they save their master all the trouble of driving.

One day, one of the Giants took it into his head he should like to have some music. So the servants presently cut down a huge hollow tree, and bored large holes at intervals in it. When this was done, the Giant claps his mouth to one of the holes, and blows into it with all his might. They meanwhile sat themselves down—for such

they knew was his good pleasure—on the other holes, which they fitted into very exactly. Then, by their hopping off and on just at the right time, however they knew when that was,—I should tell you that they had a vast sheet of music before them as long and as broad as the hollow tree was high, which they appeared to be able to read,—the music was produced.

It would be endless to tell you all the ways in which these useful servants saved the Giant every kind of trouble. They were always at hand; they never went to bed until he did, and were sure to be stirring as soon as he was, and had everything ready for him as soon as it was wanted. Some of their ways of waiting upon their master were droll enough, and might have seemed to a bystander something like taking liberties.

Thus, some time before he was well awake, they would come and rub away at his eyelids till he opened them. Then again, when, to all appearance, he was least expecting it, they would strip him and throw a bucket of cold water over him. This pleasantry was followed up by another, which consisted in taking a huge piece of sail-cloth, and rubbing him with it with all their might. Presently after, perceiving that he wanted shaving very badly, they took a long broom, and sily thrusting it like a mop into a great basin full of soap-suds, they suddenly smeared his whole mouth and chin with it; and had he not shut his mouth in a twinkling, they would infallibly have filled that too. The next thing was for four or five of them to make a spring at his nose and hold him firmly down by it, while others climbed up

to his face with a great razor in their hands, and shaved him to their hearts' content. All this the Giants endured with the greatest equanimity : anything, in a word, rather than be at the trouble of doing anything for themselves.

That was their way in everything. Instead of their ever taking a walk, a couple of stout fellows, attended by a half-a-score of understrappers, whipped them up and carried them off to wherever they desired. As to their writing letters, it was really quite a farce. Giant such-a-one would yawn and say, " Oh, dear me ! I must write that letter ;" so down he sat, and went to sleep, for aught that appeared—for there he remained, perfectly still, nodding over his sheet of paper. But though he might be asleep, perhaps, his merry-men were not. It was

great fun for them, apparently. Some of them stood on the paper to keep it still. The rest capered up and down over the page with a huge goose-quill over their shoulders, pushing it up, pulling it down, shoving it sideways ; now making a jump to dot an i ; now going ahead with it to cross a t ; then running off with it to a pool of ink hard by, and sousing it in with a hearty goodwill, till one wondered they never tumbled in themselves ; for it was big enough to have given them a good ducking.

I have said a good deal about the laziness of these Giants, and hinted at a certain degree of humbug, to say nothing of ingratitude, which they are chargeable with. To think of their taking all the credit to themselves in everything ! it really is a little too bad !

On the other hand, I think you will agree with me that it must be a charming thing to see such a thoroughly good understanding, and such harmony and goodwill, between master and servants and all. They are perfectly of one mind, and pull together. Fine confusion there would be if they did not. The garden would never get dug; the waggon would infallibly be upset; the Giant would never get dressed or shaved, and would get his chin cut into the bargain; and as for the letter-paper, it would be scrawled all over like a No. 1 copy-book.

All I would say is, if it ever should befall any of my young readers to find himself, as the saying is, in one of these Giant's shoes, with just such a set of useful, intelligent servants about him, let him sometimes

think what a curious and wonderful sort of household he has had bestowed upon him ; how strange it is they should find out for themselves what he wants to do, and should do it.





THE TROGLODYTES AND THEIR STATE-PRISONERS.



UR traveller, for such you may well suppose he was, to have seen such curious things as he did, had often read in old books of a certain people called TROGLODYTES. This hard word, Tro-glo-dytes, is as much as to say, “dwellers in holes” or “caves” under the earth. But though he had read of them, and thought it likely enough there might have been such people in former

days, he had no idea but that they had long ago disappeared from the face of the earth ; until hearing one day that there certainly were such, and that, too, within a few days' journey of him, he determined to put on his extra pair of eyes, and see for himself. As he went along, he pictured to himself the dreary condition of these unhappy specimens of the human race—dwelling all their lives in sunless caves, in the very bowels of the earth ; clad probably in sheepskins, and perhaps going on all-fours ; subsisting on roots, or animals taken in the chase ; and ignorant of all those arts which conduce to the comfort and the elevation of our species. Wrapped in these gloomy cogitations, and just as he was beginning to think that he must have been misinformed, he found himself, before he was well aware, in the

midst of this singular people. As far as eye could reach, for miles and miles in every direction, the ground was literally honeycombed with caverns of an irregular shape, the mouths of which yawned hideously, as if they would swallow him up.

Curiosity inducing him to peep into one of the caverns, he was presently aware, through the obscurity, of a kind of stairs rudely cut in the sloping face of the earth, and terminating in a trap-door, such as he had read of in the “Arabian Nights.” One of the trap-doors happening to be partly open gave him a view of the interior of the cavern; and greatly was he astonished at the contrast between the scene which his fancy had conjured up and that which met his view. Clad in gorgeous robes—whence he concluded that it was some gala-day,

though it proved afterwards that they were only taking an ordinary meal—the inhabitants were regaling themselves in a sumptuous manner. They appeared to be possessed of ample means, and to have all the comforts of life about them. Far from having anything grovelling in their appearance, many of them were uncommonly stately in their manner of carrying themselves, and sometimes seemed as if the earth was not good enough for them to tread upon. In a word, they had about them all the marks of a superior and dominant race.

Hereupon he determined to observe for himself, and try if he could make out what inducement persons of their quality and consideration could possibly have for living in such cheerless habitations. He remarked,

then, that they had built in all directions lofty towers, rising high above these caverns, consisting of several stories each. To these they had access by ladders, on the rounds of which pieces of gaily-coloured tapestry were hung, either for ornament, or to prevent their slipping in the perilous ascent. What purpose these towers could answer he was greatly at a loss to imagine. They made no use themselves of any but the highest story, which they generally used as their sleeping apartment; no doubt for the sake of the delightful prospect which it commanded of the surrounding country. All he could make out beyond this was, that the wealthy and well-dressed inhabitants of the caverns kept a very sharp look-out over what was going on in the towers. Hence he presently formed the conjecture,

which proved to be well-founded, that they had got some kind of PRISONERS confined there. There could be no doubt of it. And under very strict surveillance they kept them. The cells of the prisoners were so contrived that their jailors had notice, by means of a curious piece of mechanism, of whatever was going on. Not only their movements, but their very thoughts, it might be said, were made known to the vigilant Troglodytes by a sudden agitation of the air—much as the tyrant Dionysius is said to have kept himself posted up to the latest information as to what was going on among *his* prisoners, by means of his celebrated Ear. And in a twinkling, when anything was amiss, they might be seen climbing the ladders, and threading the corridors, until they pounced upon the

offender ; so the poor prisoners had no chance.

Of course, the said prisoners were never allowed to touch a mouthful of dinner until their tyrants, the Troglodytes, had taken care of themselves ; and, even then, they had to work hard for it, as you shall hear. Some of my readers may have seen an elephant, or a canary, drawing up its daily supply of food or water by means of a windlass. Well, in a very similar way these luckless Prisoners were set to pull hard at great ropes, by means of which they hoisted up provisions, wood, coals, or whatever else they wanted.

As you may suppose, too, the Prisoners were dressed much more plainly than the lordly and luxurious race who had them in their keeping. In other respects they were

not badly treated. They could not, indeed, apparently, get out without permission, but were allowed to do so on parole; whence our friend conjectured that they were a kind of State-Prisoners. He was strengthened in this opinion by observing that they were from time to time carried abroad, with a certain degree of ceremony, in a kind of caravan, made partly of iron bars and the rest of wood, and gaily painted, and diversified here and there with dragons, hyænas, unicorns, and other cheerful monsters, probably with the view of raising their spirits. On these occasions they were strictly guarded: a couple of stout fellows standing over them with clubs all the while, as if threatening them with instant destruction in the event of their attempting to escape.

It sometimes struck our friend as not improbable that the Prisoners were a conquered race, whom their keepers had subjugated at some early period, and kept under their dominion ever since. And, in point of fact, he found, on inquiry, that a heavy annual tribute was levied upon them, partly in specie, and partly in fruits of the earth; and that they were obliged to render it without fail, and with the utmost punctuality, to their masters.

And now my young readers will be ready to imagine that the Prisoners, notwithstanding the easy nature, in some respects, of their servitude, must have been oppressed with habitual melancholy, being under such constant surveillance, and being hardly able to call their lives, as I may say, their own. But, on the contrary, though

they sometimes grumbled a little, especially when the annual tribute was levied, on the whole they kept up their spirits wonderfully well, and seemed entirely unconscious of the state of subjection and servitude to which they had been reduced. And surely it is always delightful to contemplate the effects of philosophy and reflection in reconciling superior minds to the most trying and afflictive circumstances. And, then we must remember that they were brought up to this state of servitude. For, after all, there is much in use.





THE SHOW-HOUSE AND THE OLD HOUSEKEEPER.



IN a sequestered but delightful part of the country which I mentioned some time ago, might be seen, by such as cared for sights, a fine old MANSION, kept in the most beautiful order. The elderly Housekeeper who had the charge of it took great delight in it, and was never tired of showing it off; she only complained sometimes that there was so little rational interest or curiosity felt about

a house of such great antiquity, and containing so many objects of interest.

It is true this noble Mansion consisted (as perhaps you will be surprised to hear) of but a single room : but that was a noble room indeed to see to ; such as you might travel far and fast, and not see the like of it again. And the curiosities of it were quite inexhaustible.

The furniture was really beautiful. Some of the moveable articles, it was said, dated as far back as the Conquest ; or, however, as the Wars of the Roses, or the Spanish Armada. And as for the fixtures, they were of a solid make indeed, and of incredible antiquity. Other articles were no less remarkable for the novelty and elegance of their fashion, and the richness of their materials. And no wonder ; for as regularly

as the year came round, and the different manufacturers had made up their stock of new goods, the Housekeeper made a regular expedition of it, and returned with all the newest patterns, and most costly stuffs imaginable. The old lady made rather a secret of these expeditions, and nobody knew exactly where she dealt for her goods.

During her absence, it being the dull time of the year for much of sight-seeing, the carpets were generally covered with sheeting; blinds were drawn down, for a great part of the time, so as to exclude the sun; the coloured furniture and hangings were removed: thus reducing the grand old House to a dismantled and somewhat desolate condition. But it was astonishing what a change was effected, in a very few days, on her return. The sheeting was

rapidly rolled up and put away in store against another year, the blinds were drawn up, and the cheerful rays of the sun readmitted once more ; invisible hands, you would almost have said, displayed the new stuffs to the best advantage : and all was once more handsome and well-appointed.

One thing in the House, which was very generally admired by such as took the pains to turn their eyes up to it, was a handsome coved ceiling, quite in the old manner, painted over with what looked, at that distance, very much like a sky and clouds. Some compared it to one of Michael Angelo's famous ceilings ; others thought it not inferior to one of Claude's skies : but it is astonishing how very little attention so admirable a performance attracted. Hundreds went to Paris, or to Rome, year after

year, to gaze on the works of these great masters, who scarcely seemed conscious that they had such a treasure of art at home, or, even if they were, had not looked at it with more than a mere passing glance, in their lives.

One fancy which the good Housekeeper had, by way of showing off the House, was that of putting up her best and most beautiful curtains in the first of the morning, and again another set, quite different, but equally beautiful, in the evening ; while all the day long she would have nothing up but plain white muslin. It seemed a great pity, as everybody said : as of course nobody was likely to be at the pains to come so early as that, to be shown over the House. And as for the evening, why it was just the time when all people of any fashion were going to dinner.

But she always said, that was their look-out ; and, after all, it was very natural that she should not like to have her best damasks and silks, rich with all the colours of the rainbow, faded by exposure to the sun all day long.

I ought to explain, perhaps, that, as the House would have been otherwise rather dark, there was a good-sized moderator lamp suspended from the ceiling, even in the day-time, so contrived as to be capable of being moved easily from one part to another. As the evening drew on, however, and after she had taken down her gay curtains, when it was not likely there would be many visitors (though the House was shown by night as well as by day), then, I say, this handsome lamp was carefully put away, and a much commoner and inferior

one hung up in its place. It was said that, for economy's sake, she fed it with the oil that dripped from the best lamp, and I think it is very likely, for certainly it gave very little light. And even this supply failed her about every third or fourth week, when she had recourse to another expedient. It seems she had by her an amazing stock of candles, of all sorts and sizes. These she would put up so near the ceiling, that, though they looked pretty enough, they seemed rather put there to be seen than to see by.

Such, then, was the grand old House, and such its worthy, though somewhat eccentric, Housekeeper. There was only one thing that rendered it less perfect than it would otherwise have been. This was an incurable tendency to damp. Sometimes

when the best curtains were up, though more commonly at a time when the blinds were drawn down, the damp would begin to trickle in streams down the walls, and from the very ceiling itself. At such times the lamp was almost put out, and the beauties of the great Room sadly obscured.

At other times, however, nothing could be better worth a visit; and whenever my young readers have a holiday, they cannot do better than ask their friends to take them over some part of the great House,—for it cannot all be seen at one visit, nor in many,—under the guidance of the fine hale old Housekeeper.





THE SILVERSIDES; OR, THE DAINTY FAMILY.



DARE say many of us have occasionally fallen in with families, almost every member of which had some peculiar fancy about his diet. One did not eat this, and another could not touch that, and so on. But it is not very common to find a family in which one generation adheres steadily to one kind of diet ; the next to another and quite different one ; the third to another. Such a family,

however, there is, and I shall proceed, without further preface, to introduce them to my young readers ; though, indeed, I am very much mistaken if, in the course of the day, they do not introduce themselves.

Their name, then, is the SILVERSIDES family. Bright, cheery looking mortals they are, from the eldest to the youngest ; of polished exterior too, and with a good deal of what you call *tournure* about them ; worth a good bit of money, too, and admitted into the best circles : so that their eccentricities cannot proceed from want of means to live like other people. I consider, therefore, that their singular habits, though somehow they have never excited much remark hitherto, are well worthy of philosophical observation and an-a-ly-sis. That means, my young friends, in plain English, taking

them to pieces, to find out what on earth is the matter with them ; and why it is that they go on so strangely.

But to my story. There is, then, a largish family of them ; at the head of which stand an old gentleman and lady, manifestly the respected progenitors of all the rest. You may see that at a glance. For so like are all the young gentlemen (with only the difference of size) to the old gentleman, and all the young ladies to the old lady, that when you have seen one, you have seen all. The same round, moony, meaningless face among the men, the same long, almond-shaped, and not uncomely visage among the ladies : they really are not a bad-looking family, to those who admire the sort of thing. And one very odd thing is, that, when you look attentively at

them, they look as if their faces were set on upside down ; with their mouths at the top, and their eyes at the bottom. Not that it is usual to stare at them in that way ; it is reckoned rather rude. However, my young friends' curiosity will probably lead them to take a sly peep at their faces, after what I have said ; and they will find that it is exactly as I have described. But our concern is less with their phizzes, than with their fancies in the articles of food.

The old gentleman of all, then, is manifestly a bit of an epicure : or, it may be, that his physician has put him upon his present diet. He has long ago left off solids of every sort and kind, if ever he took any in his life, which I very much doubt. For he and all the family after him are peculiarly lanky in form, and pale in their complexion ;

which may be accounted for by their having been brought up on such peculiar eatables all their lives, as you shall hear. The old gentleman, then, I was going to say, confines himself strictly to soup, though often of the richest. He is always served first, as might be expected ; and revels in mock-turtle and mulligatawny, white soup, and brown soup, and gravy soup, and all sorts of soups : nothing of that sort comes amiss to him.

The old lady, on the other hand, never touches soup by any chance ; could not on any account. *She* takes nothing but gravy drawn fresh from the joint. To say that she *never* touched a bit of meat from one year's end to another would not be true ; but it is by the merest chance.

Then come the next generation ; the young men, who take after the father, living

(the rogues) on sauces, with an occasional glass of punch ; not caring for the joint any more than he does. Their sisters are a thought more sensible. They adhere mainly to a vegetable diet, with light puddings and the like ; only varied occasionally by made dishes, which they take some of whenever they can.

But the young people—oh, the young people!—how they are indulged and spoilt to be sure ! it is a wonder that they have any health left. Rosy cheeks, indeed, as I said, they have none ; and no wonder. For they literally live on nothing else—the bigger children, I mean,—but dessert, dessert, dessert ! Every day, whether there is company or not, they come in to dessert ! *Always remembering*, however, that they are put to bed directly after, and not allowed to

get up till the middle or afternoon of the next day ; no doubt because they have made themselves ill. And then no breakfast, no dinner, no tea ! nothing but dessert. Would anybody wish to be one of them ?

But the younger children—the *weeshies*, you know—*they* do not come in to dessert. They are brought up sensibly enough on bread-and-milk or tea ; only it seems strange they take nothing more solid with it. And this is the more remarkable, because the *very tinies* of all, the babies of the family, are allowed eggs. As you may suppose, living on them, and on nothing else, makes them bilious ; and accordingly their faces are frequently as yellow as an orange, as if they had got a touch of the jaundice.

I ought not to omit to mention that some of the younger ones among the boys have the

most strange and eccentric tastes of all. There is one who lives solely and entirely on mustard ; several have a fancy for salt, and are taking it all day long at every meal ; while one, somewhat older, and who really ought to know better, has taken to powdered sugar exclusively. But then some people are born with a very sweet tooth.





THE SYLVESTER-QUERKS; OR, THE FINE
OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN.

WHILE I am talking of families, I may as well mention a fine old fellow that our friend often met with and admired. Not that I have very much to tell you about him, but what there is is quaint, and may perhaps amuse you.

He was come, then, undoubtedly, of a fine old family, for they were here long and long before the Conquest. His great-great-great-grandfather, or thereabouts, went out

with Drake and Frobisher against the Spanish Armada : his grandfather had several round-shot pitched into him at Trafalgar ; but so sturdy was he that he never heeded them, nor were they ever extracted to the day of his death. Old Sylvester-Querck himself—for that was the family name—was reckoned worth a good sum. Part of it was to be laid out in the Stocks some day, it was said ; he put by something every year ; and this, according to some accounts, he kept tied round his waist. Others averred that he kept it in an old brown trunk that he had had when he just started in life, and which he never changed for a new one when he grew older. It seemed to grow bigger the more he put into it. Here it was that all his deeds were deposited, and it was on no account to

be opened as long as he lived. Such was the old fellow and his ways ; living on to a green old age, and taking the world very easily.

The family were thought to hold themselves rather high ; but then they had some right to do so : and certain it is that they were looked up to by their neighbours for miles round. However, the custom of the family for generations has been, that, whenever the head of it broke up, the younger branches had to go and seek their fortunes in the world ; and then there was a change. Some would go into surveyors' or merchants' offices, where they had a good deal put upon them, though they never complained. Others went into service in good families, and were thought none the worse of for it ; indeed, it was observed that they

were made much of by those whom they took service with ; and this might be the reason of their acquiring no small degree of polish, considering that they had been brought up quite in the country.

As you may suppose, the different members of the family, being very closely attached to each other, were always a good deal cut up at parting ; more especially as they never returned to the old family spot. In the meanwhile, however, there are always plenty of the younger branches to keep each other company as long as the old gentleman lives. The last time I heard of him he was bent upon going to sea, as his ancestors had done before him—brown trunk and all ; for he always had a mighty hankering to be afloat. But as long as he stays at home, the younger slips are

tolerably stay-at-home too. They move about, for all that, at times. There is an old friend of theirs, named Blowers, who comes to visit them every now and then ; and that is the sign for their being all on the move. For he is an active old fellow, I can tell you, and never lets anybody have any peace as long as he is there ; they must frolic it a bit, whether they will or no. I should not forget to add, that there is bed and board, as I may say, for all comers. If I were you, I think I should pay the old gentleman a visit some day.





THE SHAGGY PONIES.

ON one occasion our traveller made the acquaintance of a family of young people who seemed to be a good deal indulged by their kind friends. Among other things, they had each of them—what do you think?—a SHAGGY PONY given them. You will hardly believe what I have to tell you about these ponies : I can only assure you that, after all, I am telling but a part of the wonderful things that they did, or that the young folks did with them.

In their appearance there was nothing very unusual: they had a head and four legs like other ponies; like many, too, they were, as I have said, shaggy, particularly about the mane, which was covered twice as thickly as any other part of them. They were mostly of a dark chestnut colour, though in this respect there was much variety. They held their heads up nicely, he said, as if proud of their white head-stalls; but he never could perceive that they had any tails. A thickly-padded saddle made the riding easy and comfortable enough; and, besides this, there were housings, which covered their bodies nearly up, including (I suppose) their tails.

At a certain hour, the ponies were always at the door, or not far from it, all ready for riding, of course; and you might expect to

hear that the young folks looked forward to their ride with great pleasure, and were eager for the time for it to arrive. Such, however, was not the case. When once they were on, they enjoyed the exercise amazingly, and returned with cheeks glowing with health, to tell all they had seen. But they never liked mounting; whether it was they thought the animals would kick, or for whatever reason: though certain it is that it was very seldom that any accident happened. However, by dint of much persuasion and coaxing, they would get mounted at last. In the summer, of course, they wore but thin clothing; but in winter they would get all the wraps and *roughties* they could (by *roughties* they meant such things as railway-rugs and wrappers), and make themselves snug before starting. They

always said “ Good-bye ” to their parents and friends, and even to one another ; for though they set off together, they soon parted company, and went on their several ways, as inclination or accident led them. My own opinion is that they had not much control over the way their steeds went, but left it to chance.

And now comes the wonderful part of the story. I mean the astonishing swiftness of these little quadrupeds ; for though they were quite under tax—not twelve hands high, nor anything like it—the swiftest racer, nay, the fastest express-train, could not keep up with them. In fact, this amazing speed of theirs is one of the most remarkable phenomena in the whole range of natural history, and has drawn the attention of some of the most celebrated philoso-

phers of modern times. Of the fact itself there is, as I have said, no doubt ; and very minute calculations have been entered into, with the view of ascertaining the exact speed attained. It may be stated roundly at about 2000 miles in the hour ! Keeping this pace up for several hours, our young friends got, as you may suppose, a very tolerable airing ; yet, as I have said, they hardly ever met with any accident, nor did they return fatigued, but rather refreshed than otherwise.

But you may wonder in what direction or into what regions they could take such long rides : and this is what I am going to tell you about next ; though here, too, I am afraid you will hardly credit what I have to say. Some of them, then, go and see any countries they have been reading about

at any time, thousands of miles away. How they get there they never can tell; but so it is. Others visit their uncles and aunts, or their grandpapas and grand-mammas; taking some roundabout route, I suppose, to fill up the time. Others, strange as it may seem, return of their own accord to school in the very midst of the holidays, where they find their schoolfellows hard at work, or busy at play, just as if it were the middle of the half-year. What they do with their ponies meanwhile, while paying these visits, they never could quite explain when they came back. They always accomplished the same distance in each ride, and returned at very nearly the same time, whatever direction they might have been riding in.

Sometimes they had the funniest adven-

tures in these rides. They would relate how they met, perhaps, with an old lady in a red cloak whom they never remembered having seen before ; when presently she turned into their grandmamma : and then they discovered, what they had not observed before, that they were in the well-known garden, only somehow it all looked very odd and unusual ; and there were Chinamen with long pigtails walking about as if they were quite at home there. And then they found out that it was a mistake, and that they were really in China after all, and were going to have tea immediately without any milk, in small cups without any saucers. And then somehow, just as they were going to begin, they perceived that they had got into the middle of a wild-beast-show, and just as the man was going to feed the elephant, they

found themselves at their own door again, and were so sorry.

So pleasant, indeed, were the rides, that unfortunately the young folks were just as unwilling to dismount from their saddles on their return, as they had been to get into them. “Oh, do let me have one little ride more, it is so jolly!” was generally the cry, when their friends received them, perhaps after waiting some time for them. And then they were such a time taking off their riding-gear, and getting into their ordinary dress, that it was quite one of the difficulties; and they often got into scrapes for riding so long.

Well, what think you of the Shaggy Ponies? I cannot help fancying you would most of you like to have one. And I have

reasons of my own for thinking that if you will only explain exactly what sort of thing you want, and will promise to mount at once, your *kind* friends will supply you with one apiece immediately.





THE LAND OF EQUALITY.

IT has sometimes come into the heads of philosophers, and people of that description (I never saw a philosopher, I wonder what they are like) that it must be an excellent thing if the whole property of a country were distributed equally among the entire population. It seems so reasonable, that everybody should have just the same quantity of land ; just enough, you know, to maintain himself comfortably. What contentment and prosperity

there would be! Everybody with exactly enough, and nobody with too much! Dear me! And so the poet sings, you know,—

“ A time there was, ere England’s griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain’d its man.”

Now it so happened that our friend the traveller, in one of his distant expeditions, came upon a country where this sort of thing was done. That it produced all that happiness which the learned fogies above referred to would lead us to expect, he never could make out. But I say, that in that country he found every man, from the king down to the peasant, possessed of a *small estate*, of as nearly as possible the same size. So exactly, indeed, had the distribution been made, that I may safely affirm that no one man had so much as a square foot of arable

or productive ground more than another. So here you had the system, you see, in its perfection : nothing could be a fairer trial of it.

Of course, the whole population, having each a piece of land, as I have said, were agricultural in their habits, or they could have made nothing of it. And very regular they were, with few exceptions, in cultivating their crops. Some might use more irrigation than others ; one person used one kind of top-dressing (as farmers call it) for his principal crop, and another another : while most people used none at all. But every day they were hard at it ; levelling, ploughing, harrowing, and what not ; and reaping, of course, at the proper seasons. One odd thing was, though, the extraordinary difference of time the various crops

took to grow and ripen. All of them grew very quickly, to what we are accustomed to. There was the usual crop, the wheat crop as we may call it, which ripened every one or two months, all the year round. This was always got in by the assistance of some neighbour, who, of course, expected a trifle for his pains.

But this was nothing compared to another crop, which we may call the grass crop. The greatest possible difference of opinion prevailed among these small farmers as to the proper time for letting this crop stand before it was cut. Some let it stand for months; others a shorter period: and then they reaped it. But others, and perhaps the great majority, had arrived at the conclusion, after many experiments, that it was best to *mow* it, and that every day. So

a fine sight it was, for those who take interest in agriculture, to see the good people turning out, from the peer to the peasant—for somehow there *were* peers as well as peasants, for all the equal distribution of the landed property ;—to see them, I say, turning out, scythe in hand, on a fine day, to do their mowing. Many of them grumbled and thought it a good deal of trouble, and were very glad when the job was over. One thing that greatly simplified the process, and it was an odd thing too, was a heavy fall of snow which generally took place just before mowing time in that country. They used to say the crop was much easier to cut when this was the case.

I should have mentioned, that one puzzling circumstance, at least so it seemed to our friend, was, that the gentlefolks

turned out daily, even in the most inclement weather, to mow their own crops ; whereas the poorer classes were a great deal too lazy for that, and got it done for them by others, at a trifling expense, once a week. A proof, by the way, how the ordinary state of things was turned upside down in that country. It was not equality after all, but inequality turned upside down ; which, my dear young friends, is a very different thing. So that my advice is, not to have anything to do with revolutions. But I beg pardon, I am growing quite instructive ; which I know is another word with young people for being dry ; not to say prosy. So I will add no more save that—what is perhaps the oddest thing of all, and shows what queer people they were in this same “ Land of Equality ”—as soon as the crops,

of whatever kind, were carefully got in ;—after all their levelling, harrowing, scarifying, and what not ;—the crops, I was going to say, were no sooner cut and carried, than these extraordinary people—*threw them all away.*

I cannot help recording once more, therefore—at the risk of being fairly hissed off the stage—my deliberate opinion that the said people, and the said fogies, manifested after all—I like to state it in a round sonorous sort of way—a very imperfect and limited acquaintance with the grand principles either of POLITICAL ECONOMY or of SOCIAL HAPPINESS !



THE ENCHANTED ISLAND.



WHO would not like to hear about a real ENCHANTED ISLAND, like those which Sinbad the sailor visited ; with plenty of dragons, fiery appearances, magicians, heaps of silver, gold, and jewels, and all other established requisites :—perhaps a floating or a flying island, into the bargain, like Laputa in Gulliver's Travels ?

Well, I am happy to say that I am in a position to gratify my young readers' most

ardent wishes in this respect. It is quite a mistake to suppose that this sort of thing has gone out. On the contrary, in my opinion, we are only just getting into the thick of it, and shall doubtless make rapid strides from henceforth in our acquaintance with this attractive, veracious department of literature and fact. Travels are travels indeed, nowadays, if people will only find up their EXTRA EYES, and put them on, *when* they travel: that is what I say.

As to enchanted islands, there is not the smallest difficulty about that. There are thousands of them. I have seen hundreds of them myself. But I shall only tell you about one now; one that fully answers to the description that I set out with, and yet that exists as really as Old England, or New Zealand, or any other land or island, old or new, that you can mention.

Far, far away, then—floating in deep blue sea, deeply, brightly, ineffably blue—lies the Magic Isle. There are tales, and true ones, though I must not say more about them, of its having risen out of the sea to soft music ages and ages ago. Something of the kind, you know, the poet *fables* to have happened to old England :—

“ When Britain first, at Heaven’s command,
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter, the charter of the land,
And guardian Angels sung this strain.”

But our business is not with Old England and the region of fable, but with the Enchanted Island and the region of fact.

I have said, then, that it floats in a blue sea. Yes, floats. Like the green isle on Derwent-water, it has no anchorage in the

depths below, but is ever floating, floating gently and imperceptibly onwards, as if towards some mysterious port unknown, which, however, it never reaches. A mighty current is ever carrying it forward, none knows whither: all that is known is, that it is never still, but pursues its mysterious voyage without swerving and without stay.

But this is not all, nor even the most marvellous part of the Enchanted Island's relations to the sea in which it floats. Once in each day, as those have testified, who have both witnessed and experienced the strange phenomenon; once every day, I say, the entire Isle, with all its hills, and trees, and flowers; with all the men who dwell on it, and their habitations; *turns slowly over*, and immerses every living and inanimate thing upon it in the deep sea below.

What a commotion, you will suppose, must there be ! what shrieks of alarm ! what vain attempts to escape the inevitable plunge ! But it is not so. The plunge, though chilling, and accompanied, of course, by utter darkness, is perfectly harmless : and, indeed, is manifestly designed for the refreshment and invigoration of the people and the isle. A few precautions only are requisite to render this strange immersion quite innocuous. During the time that it lasts, a strange stillness prevails through the land ; somewhat like what may be observed in an eclipse. Men and beasts, for the most part, keep still, as if under a sense of awe, as the time of immersion draws near. Then, indeed, they shut their eyes, as if “ to break the shock which nature cannot shun : ” a brief period of insensibility to all outward objects ensues ; and when they again open

their eyes, they generally find that the salutary bath is over: the island has turned up again, dripping indeed, but refreshed, and glistening with the foam of the sea.

You may wonder, perhaps, how the inhabitants manage to avoid dropping into the unfathomable deep below, when the island turns over. And I cannot tell you exactly how it is; nor why the things don't fall off the tables; nor how it is that all the blood doesn't rush into their heads when they are topsy-turvy; nor again, how they manage to breathe meanwhile: but certainly it is so. It may be, as touching their breathing, that the element is more rarefied in those regions, and nearer akin to air. But we must remember that it is an Enchanted Island, and must not be estimated by common rules.

But now as to the geography and natural productions, and all that, of the island. You must know, then, in the first place, that only a very small part of it is inhabited ; just round the edges. This arises partly from its size, which is enormous ; but chiefly from the exceeding difficulty and danger of exploring the central portions of it. Like Central Africa until of late years, like Australia at this day, the interior is, except for a short distance, unexplored and unknown. And this is the more provoking, since it is well known, from the testimony of some adventurous explorers, that vast heaps of gold and silver, and piles of precious stones, lie heaped up there.

But what hinders the inhabitants, you will ask, from penetrating to the interior, and carrying away all these riches ? Well,

they *have* penetrated to a certain extent, and carried away a good deal; but still nothing, absolutely nothing, to what they have left behind. There still lies

“Inestimable gold, unvalued jewels,
All scatter’d”—

not “at the bottom of the sea,” as in Clarence’s dream in Shakespeare, but on the firm dry land.

But then these treasures are guarded with the utmost jealousy by the forces of the most powerful Queen that ever swayed an earthly sceptre. I will not except Queen Semiramis, nor Queen Victoria either. For thousands of years now have the inhabitants of the island been waging a ceaseless war with her. But though they have succeeded so far in their object, as to wrest many fair

provinces from her domain, she is still, as regards the incalculably rich region I have spoken of, invincible.

In vain have their mightiest magicians—for magicians, as I promised you, they have,—in vain have they framed mighty spells, and by help of them mapped out with the utmost accuracy regions which they have never seen. In vain have valiant troops, armed with a peculiar species of battle-axe, and war-hammers, and broad flat-headed spears, charged the forces of the great Queen. In vain has the invention of gunpowder carried devastation into the ranks of the enemy. Their resistance is as obstinate as ever, and the bringing away of treasure remains still a service of the utmost difficulty and danger. Sometimes the volunteers are overwhelmed by rocks, as the

Cyclops hurled rocks at Ulysses and his companions ; at other times an unseen expansive force, like an invisible shell, bursts among them, and destroys them by hundreds. This happens less frequently than it used. Some years ago one of the magicians of the Island framed a counter spell to this, and disarmed it for the most part of its terrors. Yet still the work of conquest is as slow and difficult as ever.

But you must not suppose I have exhausted the marvels of the Enchanted Island. Actual dragons, and various other monsters of terrific appearance, are encountered by the volunteers on the perilous expeditions I have spoken of : creatures twenty and thirty feet long, with wings and everything. However, though they are so formidable to look at, they are not really

dangerous. A spell was laid upon them ages and ages ago by the great Queen, which turned them into stone; so that, though they seem to keep watch over the treasures aforesaid, they are easily overcome, and carried away as curiosities, and are kept in menageries to this day.

Talking of dragons and serpents, though, I must not forget to speak of one most gigantic species of dragon or flying serpent which the islanders have tamed, and which they make the most extraordinary use of. You will hardly believe me, when I tell you that these serpents are often as much as seventy or a hundred yards in length, and of proportionate thickness. Their bodies consist of a number of hollow vertebræ or joints, for all the world like an ox's tail: only each joint is as big as a moderate-

sized cottage. The creature greatly resembles, indeed, the sea-serpent, as described in the American newspapers. The head is of prodigious size, as hard as iron, and thickly coated with scales; and is mostly of a green and gold colour. Out of its mouth it breathes fire; out of its nostrils proceeds a horrible smoke, which is fatal to all who approach too near to it. At night its two eyes glare in a most terrific manner through the darkness. It is now about twenty years since this formidable species of serpent was first discovered; and of course, it was only by degrees that it was thoroughly tamed. Now, however, the art has been learned thoroughly; and this hugest of known monsters, the Leviathan of the dry land, is as perfectly under control as the horse or the elephant. “ Under

control," you will say ; " well, but what is the use of such an unwieldy beast when it is under control ? I wonder they don't kill such great creatures, for fear of being swallowed up by them." And I am bound to confess that these horrid monsters have been known to swallow up several hundreds of men, women, and children at one time. There is no doubt of the fact ; for, on opening the bowels of the creature, they have been found there : and, considering all things, in a good state of preservation.

" Well, but what is the use of the serpents ?" That is just what I was coming to. You have all heard, then, how the celebrated Mr. Waterton rode the crocodile, putting a bit into his mouth, and guiding him with much dexterity. You may remember, too, how Baron Munchausen applied the eagle

to a similar use, and made some very interesting expeditions by means of it. Now these serpents are managed just in the same way, and turned to the same purpose ; only on a monster scale. The way of it is this. One intrepid fellow mounts nimbly to the head or neck of the creature, and by means of an iron bridle has him under perfect management. A confederate meanwhile mounts just behind him, and stimulates the animal to renewed exertions whenever he seems inclined to flag. Behind him again, hundreds of others climb up and cling on, and sit with their legs hanging down, greatly at their ease. When all is ready, the serpent or dragon (for I hardly know which to call him) gives a terrific snort, and off he goes through the air, and is out of sight in a few seconds. After a while he will dive down into the

very bowels of the earth, and up again. It is rather alarming at first to take such aerial rides ; but the inhabitants are much attached to the exercise, and are now quite used to it. I should tell you that the serpent is fed during the expedition with coarse black bread and water ; nothing else. You may imagine what a sight it is to look down on the Island from a balloon, and see hundreds and thousands of these dragons careering about in all directions ; snorting, wheezing, curvetting, spitting fire, breathing like a grampus ; their tails wriggling and flapping behind them at a strange rate ; and the islanders sitting astride, or in whatever posture they find most comfortable. Others of them transport bricks, timber, and all sorts of things through the air. There was an old rhyme or legend, framed many years ago,

which foretold of the disarming and taming of these serpents. It seems that there was a Sprite or Genius which used to run at large through the Island, playing off pranks now and then, but for the most part doing neither good nor harm. And the tradition was, that if this Genius were fastened down into an iron or brass pot, like the famous one which the fisherman in the Arabian Nights made acquaintance with, wonderful effects would follow, and great prosperity. The rhyme ran thus :—

“ When fire and water shall agree,
And that the Sprite that roameth free,
What time the housewife maketh tea,
In iron pot imprison'd be ;
Dragons shall fly by londe and sea,
And men shall ride right jollily.”

So much, then, for the great land-serpent.

But, in truth, the Island is a land of enchantment altogether. The common people, to say nothing of the learned ones, are all enchanters and magicians, to a man. What marvellous feats of enchantment they can perform! One of them will take a little brown hard thing, no bigger than the nut that Cinderella's fairy godmother turned into a chariot, and out of it he will make you, if you give him a little time—oh! I can't say what he won't make—tables and chairs, and furniture without end. Another will take the ragged clothes of a beggar, and grind them very small, and then make them worth thousands and thousands of pounds. So you see what rich people beggars are in that country: for the magician couldn't do the same with a rich man's clothes.

Then the natural productions of the country ! I will only describe one of them. At intervals all over the land, though chiefly in particular spots, there grow trees whose trunks and branches and all are underground. All but the flowers—they grow in beautiful clusters, or one at a time, at the top of straight twigs shooting up out of the underground branches. These flowers bloom and fade once in every twenty-four hours. They are of a bright golden colour, and appear in one instant full blown ; and after their brief day is past, fade in an instant in like manner. Few persons have seen the trunks or the branches either ; but those who have, depose that the trunks are sometimes forty or fifty feet in diameter. The branches are but small, but of enormous length—often two or three miles long or more.



THE MARVELLOUS PALACE AND THE INVISIBLE PRINCE.

NOW for a tale of an Invisible Prince, and a Marvellous Palace that he lived in; the greatest wonders, and best worth seeing or hearing about, of all that our friend met with. So at least he judged, and I shall not be surprised if my young friends should think so too.

And first for the PALACE; which had so many curiosities about it, that I hardly know where to begin; and when I have

begun, I shall hardly know how to leave off. As for its size, how vast it was, you may imagine, when I tell you that a hundred thousand windows, opening and closing by an exquisite mechanism, admitted the air of heaven. Its height you will guess at better, when you hear of the immense stature of the Invisible Prince who inhabited it. And as for its form, and the costliness and delicacy of its structure, they were beyond compare. Not all the jewels and gold in the world could come near it in value ; not all the architects alive could build such a palace, or lay a single stone of it. As to its exterior, it was formed of a kind of delicately-varied and polished alabaster ; and the roseate tints of its semi-transparent walls rivalled and far excelled the glories of Milan. And, marvellous to relate, their colour came and went, flushed and faded,

like that of the fabled chameleon, or like the sunset hues of autumn. Strange, that so exquisite and finely wrought a material should be hung around, and hidden, for the most part, by mean and ignoble tapestry : sometimes gay indeed, but often sombre and unsightly ; and, at best, as inferior to what it concealed, as the shell is to the pearl. But so it was ordained by an old decree of the kingdom, which the Prince himself was obliged to respect. The glorious front alone was, for the most part, spared this dishonour, and exhibited to view.

Another goodly feature of its construction, externally, was its roof of golden reeds—so delicately fashioned, that each one was a marvel of skill, such as no artist could come near imitating ; and yet so fine, that it took thousands to cover in a few inches.

Yet this many-windowed, marvellously-

walled edifice, lodging a Prince of such lofty stature, with all his suite, could be transported through the air with the utmost ease, and almost by a wish, Prince and all, from one part of his dominions to another ! And those dominions were vast indeed ; so much so, that you might go on in a straight line for ever, and never find any frontier, or come to an end of them.

But you will be anxious by this time to hear a little more about the PRINCE himself, and his kingdom : so I will tell you a little about that. First of all, then, he had, as my title tells, the fairy gift of invisibility. You may suppose what a valuable gift this was to him in conducting his affairs of state, and ruling over his kingdom. He could be here, there, and everywhere, without anybody knowing it. Indeed, his rule was to have

access to every one of the countless apartments in the Palace ; and he seemed in fact to inhabit all of them at once. The consequence was, that nothing was done in any department of state without his privity and knowledge : his will was law, and he saw to the execution of all his own orders. Then again, being invisible, he could roam abroad at will, unencumbered by state dresses and equipages. He could take a flight, (for he was as swift in his motions as he was invisible in his form,) to the ends of the earth, or to the stars themselves, and return without any one being the wiser. And these journeys cost him little or no exertion. It was sometimes observed, however, that the glowing colours of the palace walls grew paler and more faded when he took such excursions for a long time together, as if

they pined in his absence, through a mysterious sympathy with their lord.

But the most wonderful thing of all was the manner of administering the affairs of his kingdom. The whole business of state was mapped out into five great departments, presided over by as many lords or satraps. The business of these was to receive and transmit to the Sovereign information of every kind in their several departments. Each had his official suite of apartments in the Palace, for the dispatch of business ; where they collected information, and transmitted it at once to the Prince in his principal chamber and hall of audience. Their names were Horasis and Acoë (who were esteemed the First Lords of the administration), and after them Aphe, Geysis, and Osphresis.

Here is some account of how Horasis

managed his department. Two ample chambers, placed high up in the Palace, and filled with a mystic apparatus of many-coloured spheres, crystal lenses, and other instruments, were provided for his use. Into these chambers, the windows of which were flung open on purpose all day, and sometimes part of the night, were darted continually golden arrows by day, and silver arrows by night, inscribed in some way, like the arrow aimed at Philip of Macedon, with information as to what was going on in the kingdom. By means of the spheres, and lenses, and other instruments before mentioned, a kind of photograph of the scenes thus described was transferred with the utmost rapidity to the inner wall of the chamber, and transmitted instantaneously to the king. Horasis was reckoned, on the

whole, the most trustworthy of the king's ministers : his department enjoyed the highest reputation for accuracy, and he was held in proportionate estimation by the Prince himself. It was observed that his official chambers were protected by a kind of case-mating of peculiar strength from accident or injury. And no wonder : for the slightest damage to the spheres or other instruments would have inflicted an irreparable loss on the Prince and kingdom.

Hardly less curious were the chambers assigned to Acoë. Hard by the Palace lay a lake of some purer and more ethereal element than water, but in all other respects greatly resembling it. On its delicate wavelets were borne continually light invisible barks, freighted with tidings from the kingdom without. The chambers of Acoë lay

on a level with the lake, and were open to the ingress of the waters, thus freighted. And in and in, and round and round, through the windings of a marble grot, the wavelets blindly felt their way, and bore the fairy barks upon their bosom: till at last, with gentle blow, they knocked for admittance at the far-resounding doors of his official chamber, and the tidings they bore were quickly telegraphed on to the Prince upon his throne.

In a somewhat different way did the other great Ministers of State collect information. For their use was spread a delicate and imperceptible network, covering every part of the Palace within and without. By means of the impressions made upon this network, the minutest changes in affairs without, affecting the interests of the Prince

and the kingdom, were registered and conveyed to the throne.

Thus informed, then, by means of his trusty and right well-beloved ministers, of everything that was going forward, our Prince was in a good position, as you perceive, to administer his affairs. Then, of course, the next thing to be done was to decide upon the line to be pursued in this and that matter, after the reports of the different departments had been sent in. And here I might tell you a great deal about the Privy Counsellor by whom he was guided, or ought to have been, in all his decisions ; and about dissensions, not unfrequently, in what they call the Cabinet, you know, between him and other ministers who were not at all so well qualified to judge. But I have my doubts whether this sort of thing

would have much attraction for my young readers, with whom I am anxious to part on the best possible terms. - So I will say no more than that I hope, when they are a little older, they will study for themselves some of the wonders, of which I have only told the thousandth part, to be observed in the MARVELLOUS PALACE. And if they were also to pay some attention, even now, to the nature of the kingdom, the jurisprudence and manner of government, of the INVISIBLE PRINCE, it would do them no harm.

THE END.

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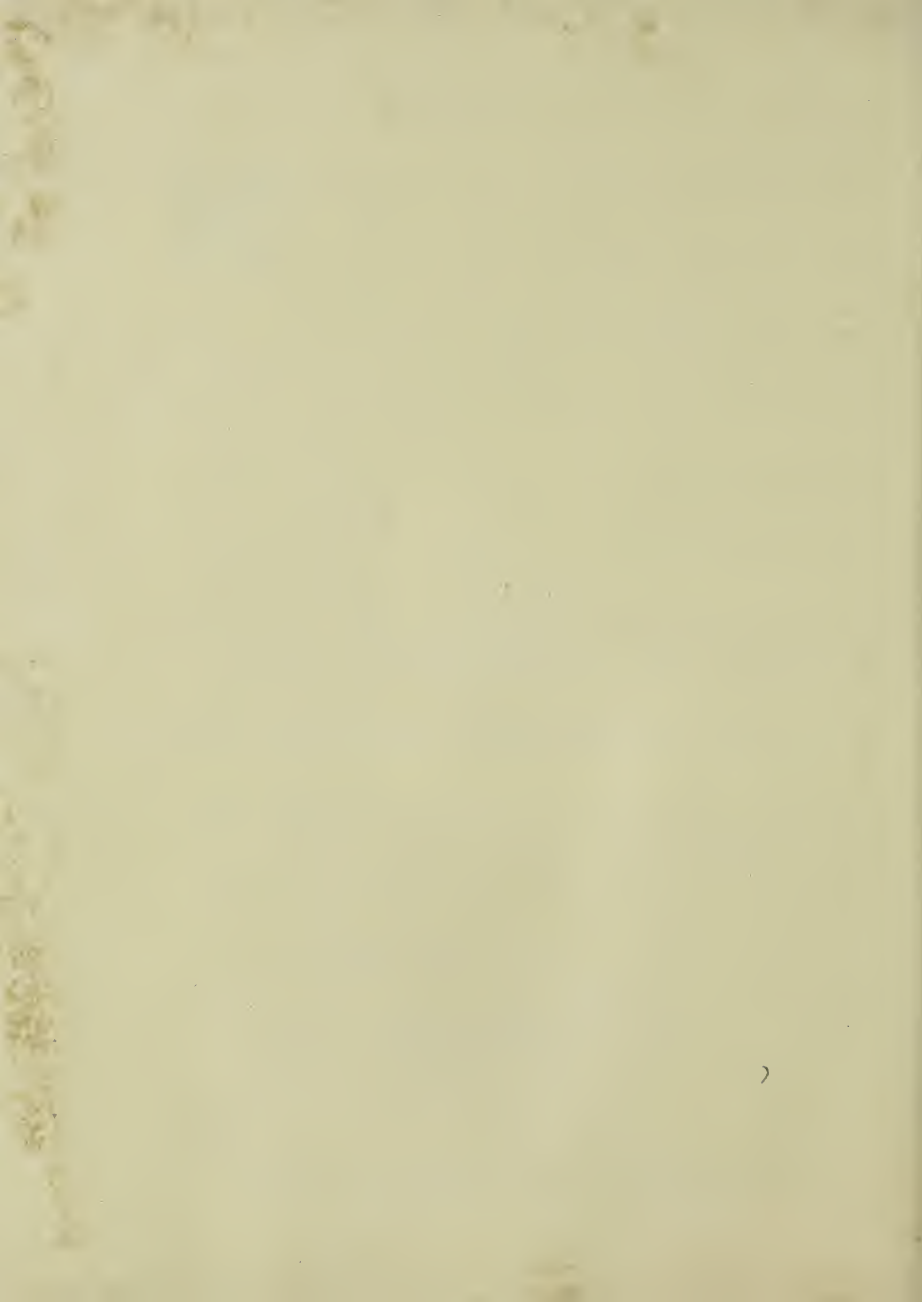
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